

Minutes of the Seven Corners Opportunity Area C Special Working Group December 2, 2014

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM
Mason District Government Center

Attendance:

Special Working Group: George Fitchko, Bill Lecos, Karl Moritz, Catriona McCormack, Marty Machowsky, Blake Smith, Martin Faga, Margaret Van Voast, Jan Keyes, and Duane Morse

Staff: Elizabeth Hagg (OCR), JoAnne Fiebe (OCR), Hyojung Garland (OCR), Bernard Suchicital (DPZ), Kim Rybold (DPZ), Kris Morley-Nikfar (DOT), and Aaron Frank from the Office of Supervisor Penny Gross

Review and Approval of Minutes

Marty Faga asked if there were any corrections to the Minutes of November 6, 2014. Duane Morse moved to approve the Minutes as written, which was seconded by Jan Keyes. The Minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairman's View of the "big questions"

Marty Faga outlined the "big questions" that came up at the charette or design workshop that need to be addressed, including:

- How big should the plan be?
- How large does the project have to be to generate a successful, walkable, mixed-use project that is a "place"?
- How much residential should there be?
- What is the appropriate mix of residential, office and retail?
- What kind of transition is needed between the project and adjacent neighborhoods?
- What are the impacts on transportation and roadways?
- How many students will the project generate?

He said they want input from the community about each of these questions. He offered some facts about the Sears site as follows:

- The land is valued at \$2 million an acre
- The two 50,000 SF office buildings on either side of Sears are valued at roughly \$10 million
- The 150,000 SF Sears store is valued at roughly \$15 million
- The floor-area-ratio (FAR) of the existing buildings is 0.5 FAR, but the current zoning would allow up to 0.8 or 1.0 FAR
- About 10 percent of the property is green buffer; everything else that is not a building is covered by parking lots
- Most new projects nearby, e.g. 6406 Arlington Boulevard, have a FAR of 2 or more

One key area of discussion was Juniper Lane. The three teams had identified various approaches to reducing cut-through traffic and preserving existing neighborhood streets, including: dead-ending Juniper Lane, making Juniper Lane one-way, realigning Juniper Lane to either connect to Patrick Henry or directly to the intersection of Patrick Henry and Leesburg Pike (and eliminating the need for the service drive), and installing various traffic calming measures to Juniper Lane. Kris Morley-Nikfar stated that any of these proposed changes to the roadway network would need to be analyzed in order to make changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Thus, the renderings of the three team concepts each had a dashed circle around Juniper Lane with a notation that a study is required. Kris distributed proposed draft text for the Transportation section of the draft Seven Corners Plan amendment that would address the Juniper Lane traffic calming. The text essentially would add the following bullet under the "Seven Corners Area Road Recommendations" in the Transportation section of the Plan:

"Conduct further analysis of the roadway network in the vicinity of Juniper Lane and Patrick Henry Drive. This analysis should identify potential strategies to limit cut-through traffic, as well as reduce possible traffic impacts generated by future development, to the surrounding residential neighborhoods while improving connectivity within these neighborhoods. Such analysis should be conducted prior to or concurrent with rezoning applications for non-residential properties abutting Juniper Lane and/or Patrick Henry Drive."

Additionally, Kris read a proposed draft Follow-On Motion that that would be added to other Follow-On Motions for consideration by the Board of Supervisors with the Plan amendment. The proposed motion read as follows:

"The Board directs staff to conduct a traffic analysis of the roadway network in the vicinity of Juniper Lane and Patrick Henry Drive. This analysis should identify potential strategies to limit cut-through traffic, as well as reduce possible traffic impacts generated by future development, to the surrounding residential neighborhoods while improving connectivity within these neighborhoods. Such analysis should be conducted prior to or concurrent with rezoning applications for non-residential properties abutting Juniper Lane and/or Patrick Henry Drive."

Marty Machowsky said he thought that Sears site access only to Route 7 had been agreed to. Kris replied that they would need to do the analysis. Marty Faga reminded members that the final TF draft design was what had been modeled and sent to VDOT for its review. Marty Machowsky asked if they could recommend access to the site only be from Route 7 and Kris replied "yes".

Discussion of the three concepts resumed. Bill Lecos described Team 3's concept and how they are proposing vertical integration of uses; i.e. ground-floor retail and community serving office on the second and third floors. Duane Morse said they should identify what they want in terms of park, civic space and retail. They should focus on what they want on the ground-floor and second floor. His team left the building heights to be determined. He noted that the land between Juniper Lane and Patrick Henry was the lowest elevation of the entire site and that if they realigned Juniper Lane there would be more space for a bigger, taller building at this location. He raised the question of whether the SWG wants to put density on this portion of the site with access unresolved.

Clyde Miller from the audience asked if VDOT is okay with the proposed access to major arterials. JoAnne replied that VDOT has distance standards between intersections and that what they are showing would be okay with VDOT.

Debbie Smith from the audience asked about whether the school system will address the proposed uses? She noted that Sandy Evans was asking to use different student-yield ratios for the Mason District. Marty Faga replied that the school system will be asked to address the issue.

Marty Faga stated that he would like the SWG to put forward a plan that has some economic viability. He suggested Dick Knapp or perhaps a real estate advisory consulting firm like Jones Lang LaSalle could review their draft plan and comment on its general viability. Marty Machowsky asked if they would be driven by what is economically viable today or what the community wants long-term? He noted that Washington Post reporter Robert McCarthy said the region would be experiencing slower growth due to the decline of federal contracts. He said there are so many cycles. Marty Faga suggested Dick Knapp give them a basis for a proposal and identify the various considerations a developer undertakes followed by review by some independent entity. Duane Morse said he would like to hear what a developer thinks. He believes the SWG can think critically. Bill Lecos said he liked the idea of independent analysis. He thought development is a matter of timing and would like to get a sense of how their concept values out. Blake Smith stated that the community wants amenities with as little cost in terms of density as possible

Someone from the audience asked about real estate data firm CoStar and mentioned a contact named Greg Leash.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

The next Special Working Group meeting will be on Wednesday, January 7, 2015, at 6:30 pm at the Mason District Government Center.

Signed on Marty's behalf.
Marty Faga
By: _____

01/07/2015
Date: _____